

Office of the Sheriff

The Sheriff is the highest ranking law enforcement officer in the County. The duties of the Sheriff are described primarily in general law codified in the Tennessee Code Annotated at §§5-7-10 8, 8-8-201, and 8-8-213 and fall generally into four basic categories: (1) conservator of the peace/law enforcement, (2) civil process, and (3) corrections/jail/workhouse and (4) courthouses. The Sheriff must be thoroughly acquainted with the Tennessee criminal code, civil and criminal aspects of the federal civil rights laws, Tennessee Governmental Tort Liability Act, and numerous other laws. The Sheriff must operate under strict legal standards and must strive to perform his/her duties correctly. The Sheriff can be held personally liable under federal law for actions taken in the performance of his/her duties.

To keep the peace, the Sheriff must suppress all riots, disturbances, unlawful assemblies, and other breaches of the peace. The Sheriff must also detect and prevent crime, make lawful arrests, fingerprint each person arrested, patrol the roads of the County, and enforce the ordinances of the County and any municipality adopting the required ordinance.

The Sheriff is obligated to execute and return, according to law, the process and orders of the courts of record, and of all officers of competent authority, with due diligence, when delivered to the Sheriff. The Sheriff also may be ordered to levy execution upon a defendant's property, first upon goods or chattels, if there are any, and land in order to satisfy judgment, and upon a surety's property in the proper case.

State law requires the Sheriff take charge and custody of the jail. The Sheriff must receive and detain all individuals who are lawfully arrested until they are released or discharged by a court of law.

The Sheriff is also charged with the custody and security of the courthouses. The Sheriff must attend upon all of the courts held in the County, cause the courtrooms to be kept in order and obey the lawful orders and directions of the court.

To learn more about the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, visit the Sheriff's website at www.shelby-sheriff.org.